

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2713

AMCONSUL ADANA

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AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, TU

SUBJ: PUBLIC SECTOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING - III

REF: ANKARA 5073

1. AT A SPECIAL MEETING ON JULY 21 THE TURKISH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS APPROVED THE AGREEMENT TO REGULATE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND WAGE POLICIES DRAWN UP BY PRIME MINISTER BULENT ECEVIT AND HALIL TUNC, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADE UNIONS (TURK-IS). THE MAIN GUIDELINES AS ANNOUNCED INCLUDE: (A) THE LEVEL OF PURCHASING POWER OF 1976 WILL BE THE CEILING FOR WAGE INCREASES, (B) MINIMUM NORMS FOR FRINGE BENEFITS WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY A JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE, (C) WORKERS' PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WORKSITES WILL BE INSURED, (D) JOINT TECHNICAL COMMITTEES WILL BE SET UP TO CONSIDER REVISIONS IN THE LABOR LAW, PARTICULARLY PROVISIONS TO PROTECT WORKERS AGAINST DISCHARGE, (E) REFERENDUM (I.E. PLANT ELECTION) WILL BE THE PRINCIPLE TO FOLLOW TO DETERMINE WHICH UNCLASSIFIED

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TRADE UNION HAS THE RIGHT TO REPRESENT THE WORKERS AT EACH WORKSITE, (F) WORKERS WILL BE GIVEN SHARES FROM PROFITS, (G) A STANDING COMMITTEE WILL FUNCTION UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MINISTER OF STATE TO MAINTAIN GOVERNMENT-LABOR COOPERATION IN MATTERS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GROWTH.

2. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE FOLLOWING THE APPROVAL OF THE AGREEMENT PRIME MINISTER ECEVIT EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THIS AGREEMENT HAD BROUGHT LABOR LIFE TO A NEW STAGE AND WOULD STRENGTHEN TURKISH DEMOCRACY. HE CALLED THE AGREEMENT A "SOCIAL CONTRACT" SUPPORTING THE INTEREST OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. TUNC ALSO PRAISED THE AGREEMENT AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT THE TURK-IS/GOVERNMENT TALKS COULD BE SO SUCCESSFUL WHEN CARRIED OUT ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND GOOD WILL. IT WAS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD INITIATE FURTHER TALKS WITH THE CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH REVOLUTIONARY/REFORMIST TRADE UNIONS (DISK) AND THAT DISK WOULD BE INVITED TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT.

3. COMMENT. THE GOVERNMENT AND TURK-IS HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO AVOID ANY SUGGESTION OF PLACING LIMITATIONS ON WAGES. IN FACT, ECEVIT AND TUNC EACH MADE STATEMENTS DENYING ANY ATTEMPT OR DESIRE TO FREEZE WAGES. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS IMPLICIT IN THE AGREEMENT THAT CURRENT AND FUTURE CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD DISPLAY APPROPRIATE RESTRAINTS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE TURKISH ECONOMY. WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DETAILS AGREED UPON, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE ACCURATELY THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, THE USE OF PRICE INCREASES IN THE FORMULA TO DETERMINE WAGE LEVELS SUGGESTS THAT THE CHANGES

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NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN 1976 REAL WAGES WILL RESULT IN INCREASES IN THE RANGE OF 50 PERCENT A YEAR. QUESTIONS OF RETROACTIVITY OF THE NEW WAGE LEVELS HAVE NOT BEEN MENTIONED AND MAY BECOME SERIOUS BONES OF CONTENTION.

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